



ALUMNI NEWS

St. Joseph Alumni Association Newsletter

June 2017

Journey to Excellence

St. Joseph students have again outperformed other area schools in standardized assessment testing.

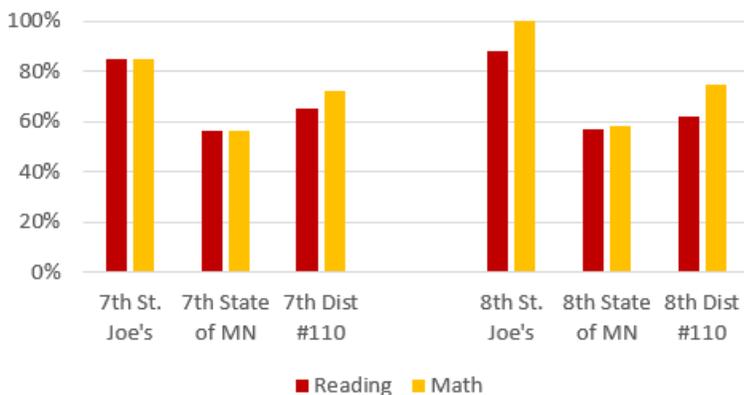
At St. Joseph we analyze our math and reading results carefully. The results below are conclusive results of students who have been at our parish school for many years. We are proud of their efforts and the work of our teachers and parents to support their academics.

*“Excellence is a Journey,
not a Destination.”*

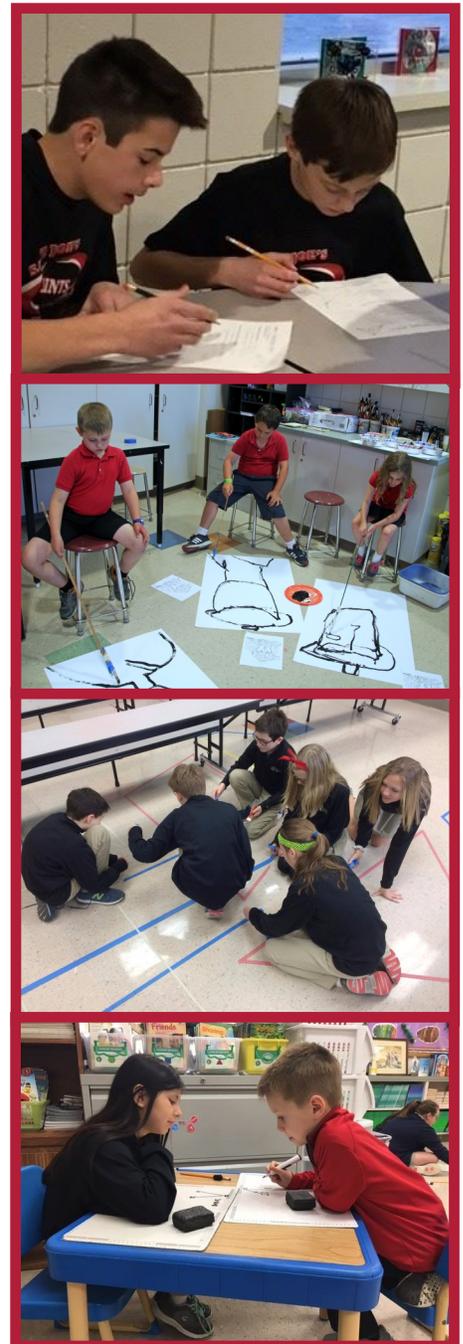
88% of SJ 8th grade students tested as proficient in reading on the exam, compared to 62% statewide, and 100% of SJ 8th grade students tested as proficient in math, compared to 75% percent statewide

“While this is only one measure of student success, we know the results are important for our families and staff as we continue to advance our tradition of excellence,” Principal Bruce Richards said.

Spring MCA Reading & Math Comparisons



St. Joe's NWEA MAP scores are correlated to Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) through a 2016 linking study that compares MAP and MCA data in both reading and math.



Fox 9 Top Teacher

Mrs. Jill Good was taken by surprise during a recent morning assembly when she was honored with a Top Teacher award presented by Fox 9 News.

Mrs. Good is a fourth grade teacher at St. Joseph Catholic School, and was awarded for the passion and inspiration that she brings to her classroom on a daily basis.

"Mrs. Good was nominated by one of the parents of a student in her class, Mrs. Opal Ehalt. Ehalt works in the Minneapolis School District. She works to help educators in her district achieve excellence and she has a keen eye for greatness and thankfully she took the time to recognize that in Mrs. Good," said St. Joseph principal Bruce Richards.

Ehalt wrote, "Mrs. Good takes the time to get to know each student individually and tailors her teaching, assignments and lessons to highlight their gifts and talents. She makes learning fun, and at the same time has high standards. Kids really love to learn in her class."

As a Top Teacher winner, Good received \$900 for classroom supplies, a Subway sandwich party for 50, as well as a Fox 9 Top Teacher Glass Apple for her desk.

Congratulations, Mrs. Good!



Literacy skills are on the rise at SJ!

St. Joseph School adopts a new curriculum each year. That chosen curriculum is used for a period of seven years. A new Reading/Language Arts curriculum was adopted for the 2016-17 school year.

Our new elementary literacy program uses researched based instructional frameworks that build phonemic awareness & phonics, as well as fluency and comprehension strategies, as students are **learning to read**. The middle years curriculum focuses on **reading to learn** and begins in fourth grade. Our fourth grade curriculum serves as a bridge between the primary years and the middle school years. The students are enveloped in a program called *Reading Workshop* which is a literature rich way of learning to be a better reader, writer, and speaker. A main goal of the *Reading Workshop* is to help students fall in love with reading. The students are given a "40 Book Challenge" to read a variety of genres of books. The 4th graders rise to the challenge as they become reading machines.

Our 5th - 8th grade curriculum utilizes four comprehensive integrated modules each year. Each module comes with novels that are supported by a list of recommended texts – books, articles, and primary source documents – that balance literary and informational texts at appropriate levels of complexity.

Students build expertise about topics and often share that expertise with classmates or a wider audience. Students use evidence, including students self-assessing, learning to ask strong text-dependent strategic questions as they read, and complete research for a real purpose.

Performance tasks require students to cite textual evidence, to revise their writing and critique their peers' writing, and share their writing with a real audience. Students are exposed to a wide range of increasingly complex texts to build background knowledge and interest. Awakened curiosity gives students purpose for reading, then we support and challenge them with increasingly complex texts.

Some early results show both quantitative and qualitative growth. Our middle school students identified that they have doubled the amount of reading that they used to do and our test results indicate the positive impact that our program is having on student learning.

HELP US UPDATE OUR ALUMNI RECORDS

If you are a graduate or a former student or know someone who is, please take a moment to provide us with updated contact information by submitting your contact information online at:

<http://school.stjosephwaconia.org/alumni>

You may also email your information to:

alumni@stjosephwaconia.org



Alumni

St. Joseph Alum

State Champion



Emily Sokolis ('15) competes at Junior Olympics

During the summer before her 6th grade year at St. Joseph Catholic School, Emily Sokolis participated in a fencing camp at Holy Family Catholic High School. She was hooked from the beginning and began competing with the Holy Family fencing team as a 6th grader.

Having just recently completed her sophomore year at Holy Family, Sokolis has already anchored the Holy Family Women's FOIL Fencing team to four state championships.

In 2016, Sokolis was the heavy favorite going into the individual competition at the Minnesota State High School Championship. Sokolis did not disappoint as she earned the Women's Foil Championship.

In 2017, Sokolis finished second in the individual state competition by placing runner-up to the current junior world cup champion.

Emily captains the Holy Family team where she has been recognized as the Most Valuable Fencer for four years.

In addition to fencing with her high school team, Sokolis fences on the North American Cup Tour while being coached by Ro Solbavarro, the 2012 Olympic coach for the women's fencing team in London where he led the team to a bronze finish. Sokolis has been invited this summer to Taiwan to help train the Taiwan national team before their Asia Championships later this summer.

When Sokolis is not fencing, she is a member of the Holy Family Concert Band and Pep Band; she was inducted into the honor society this year; she will be a member of the Holy Family Voices of Fire next year; she is a two time presidential gold award winner for volunteering more than 250 hours of service annually; and she was selected to be a representative for Holy Family at the MN High School Leadership Retreat. Sokolis also held the lead role in the spring musical at Holy Family, *James and the Giant Peach!*



Emily Sokolis, middle, is pictured here with two of her teammates including Ava Kunze (SJ '15), left.

How well did SJCS prepare you for high school?

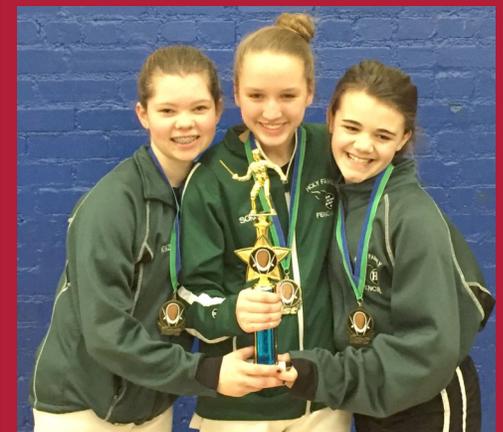
The classes, group projects, and curriculum at St. Joe's prepared me well for the intensity of my classes at Holy Family Catholic High School. Although STEM did not start at SJ until my 8th grade year, I believe that it is an excellent tool for bridging the gap between subjects which have a lot in common, but yet still have their individual characteristics. I would have loved to experience more years of STEM at SJ.

Did you have a favorite teacher and subject at St. Joe's?

My favorite teacher was Mr. Sean Barker. He taught music history and improv skills. He also taught me life skills and how to be my own person and embrace my musical talents. I continue to use these skills and talents in high school which help me adjust socially to high school, make new friends, and experience new endeavors.

Favorite memory of years at SJ?

One of my favorite memories was being part of a group that implemented convocation each Monday morning. I enjoyed planning convocation which allowed my friends and I to use our creativity to incorporate fun-filled faith-based activities in a large group setting.





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**Helium Balloon Rosary
May Crowning Mass**

Picture by Dana Boll Young ('90)

*St. Joseph Catholic School is the only K-8 STEM school in
the state of Minnesota with a SmartLab!*

*Only 6.7% of women graduate with STEM degrees.
When we encourage girls to pursue STEM,
we double our potential for innovation.*

Contact Us

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Principal: Mr. Bruce Richards



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